

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 TRSE-00 HA-05 /055 W

-----093806 302233Z /72

O R 302158Z JAN 78

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5538

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 0446

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, NU, SHUM

SUBJECT: PRIVATE SECTOR STATEMENT OF JANUARY 29

1. AT A MEETING ON SUNDAY JAN 29 THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PRINCIPAL NICARAGUAN PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS APPROVED THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:

"THE ORGANIZATIONS OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR, IN PERMANENT SESSION, DECLARE: THAT THE SUCCESSFUL NATIONAL WORK STOPPAGE, THAT HAS REACHED PROPORTIONS NEVER SEEN BEFORE, HAS BEEN POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF THE TOTAL SUPPORT OF THE NICARAGUAN PEOPLE WHO, IN THIS WAY, MANIFEST THEIR REPUDIATION OF AND PROTEST AGAINST THE ABSENCE OF JUSTICE AND LIBERTY.

"CONSCIOUS OF THE CRUCIAL MOMENT THROUGH WHICH THE COUNTRY IS GOING, WE REAFFIRM OUR DECISION TO CONTINUE THE WORK STOPPAGE UNTIL THERE IS JUSTICE AND LIBERTY IN NICARAGUA.

"CENSORSHIP OF RADIO AND TELEVISION IMPOSED BY THE GOVERNMENT WITHOUT
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A LEGALLY DECREED STATE OF SIEGE OPENLY VIOLATES THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC. "WE SUPPORT ENERGETICALLY THE VALIANT STAND TAKEN BY THE UNION OF RADIO BROADCASTERS OF MANAGUA IN DEFENSE OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE OF NICARAGUA.

"THE FORCE OF REPRESSION WILL NOT BEND THE WILL OF THE NICARAGUAN PEOPLE."

2. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE CHAMBER OF INDUSTRIES WAS ABSENT FROM YESTERDAY'S MEETING AND, THEREFORE, DID NOT SUBSCRIBE TO THE COMMUNIQUE, BUT TODAY, JAN 30, THEY REJOINED THE GROUP.

3. THE REFERENCE TO CENSORSHIP RELATES TO COERCION BY THE GON TO RESTRICT REPORTING OF CURRENT EVENTS. IT HAS INCLUDED TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF BROADCASTING OF AT LEAST TWO RADIO NEWS PROGRAMS.

4. COMMENT: THIS UNUSUALLY STRONG STATEMENT BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS CONTRADICTS THE PERSISTENT RUMORS THAT HAD CIRCULATED EARLIER THAT THE STRIKE MIGHT COME TO AN END ON MONDAY, JAN 30. ACCORDING TO SOME EMBASSY SOURCES, THE DETERMINATION OF THE LEADERS OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO CONTINUE THE STRIKE HAS ONLY BEEN STRENGTHENED

BY THE GOVERNMENT'S INCREASINGLY OVERT THREATS OF REPRISALS. THEY MIGHT HAVE ALSO BEEN INFLUENCED BY THE RUMOR THAT PRESIDENT HAD PROMISED THE CABINET AND NATIONAL GUARD LEADERS THAT THE STRIKE WOULD BE OVER ON MONDAY (N.B. A CABINET OFFICER TOLD EMBOFF THAT THERE IS NO TRUTH TO THAT RUMOR). THE ONLY INFORMATION THE STRIKE MAY BE ENDING COMES FROM A REPRESENTATIVE OF A MAJOR MANUFACTURING FIRM IN MANAGUA, WHICH HAS BEEN CLOSED, WHO INFORMED EMBOFF ON JAN 30 THAT THEY PLANNED TO REOPEN ON JAN 31 AND THAT THEY UNDERSTOOD MOST OTHER BUSINESSES WOULD ALSO BE REOPENING ON THE SAME DAY. EMBASSY WILL REPORT BY SEPTTEL ON EFFECTIVENESS OF STRIKE THROUGH TODAY, JAN 30.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRIVATE ENTERPRISE, COMMUNIQUE, GENERAL STRIKES, POLITICAL FREEDOM
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MANAGU00446
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780044-1100
Format: TEL
From: MANAGUA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978018/aaaaagnv.tel
Line Count: 95
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 9aa4eae4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3799495
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRIVATE SECTOR STATEMENT OF JANUARY 29
TAGS: PINT, PINS, SHUM, ELAB, NU
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9aa4eae4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014